

It could be worse… New York City, Feb. 2006

* **All students, 6th, 7th, and 8th, will take a technology survey starting April 18th and finishing by April 22nd. The survey will be done during Science class time. After this year, 6th grade will take the survey in the fall and 8th grade in the spring. This is a DPI organized event.**
* **Staff will take the survey May 1st through the 13th. Instructions for the “Next Generation for Teachers” survey will come out soon. The survey must be completed by May 13th (Transition In Service day).**
* **MAP testing will start April 25th using the same procedures as previous testing sessions.**
* **WKCE test results are in and I have saved them to the Staff Shared folder: “WKCE 2011”. There are several different reports, if you don’t see one you need, call me.**
* **VOIP phone system will be operational in April. Phones will be installed in rooms,**
* **SmartBoards will be installed during the day, in April. This may be inconvenient for teaching so you may want to look at an alternative room for a period or two.**
* **Information for the PLP tab in Infinite Campus (see the “…Don’t Forget…” on how to access):**
* **Parent contact by phone, email, letter**
* **Parent contact in person**
* **Held a SST meeting—reference made to the binder for details**
* **Student using a BIP**
* **Miscellaneous information that would provide insight to the student**

Current Research and Information—

# 3. Accelerating Struggling Middle-School Students

            In this *Middle School Journal* article, Christine Finnan of the College of Charleston and South Carolina high-school teacher Dennis Kombe describe a program that sought to accelerate over-age seventh graders through two years of academic content in one year. The goal was to get these struggling students to reestablish their identity as learners and rejoin their age-mates in ninth grade. Here are the details:

-   Eligible students were invited to apply, but students with serious behavior and/or learning disorders were eliminated from the pool.

-   The Accelerated Program was located in four portable classrooms on the campus of a suburban middle school.

-   The program focused heavily on reading and math, which were taught in 90-minute blocks.

-   Students used the Read 180 computer curriculum to condense two years of material into one year.

-   Class size was maintained at 15, and a partner university provided extra staff and resources, including a full-time program director, enrichment activities (field trips and service-learning experiences), one-on-one tutoring, and ongoing research.

-   Social studies and science were taught in one 90-minute block each day.

-   The same teachers taught all core subjects, so there was a family-like atmosphere in the program.

-   A full-time counselor and the program director provided social and emotional support to students, including individual goal-setting and a Stop the Drama intervention to address interpersonal issues among some of the girls.

What were the results? Finnan and Kombe say that “students began to shift their sense of self to make room for future success in school and in life.”

-   Attendance was strong, averaging only three absences per student.

-   Behavior infractions were low – only one suspension the first year of the program and zero the second.

-   In the first cohort, 33 of 37 students successfully completed the program and were promoted to ninth grade.

-   In the second cohort, 33 students entered and 33 were promoted.

What happened when these students entered high school? Finnan and Kombe say that students’ “fragile identity shift was tested.” Here are some downstream results:

-   In the first cohort, 42% of students stayed on track and were in 11th grade three years later; 42% of this cohort were in tenth grade that year; the remaining 16% of students were still in ninth grade.

-   In the first cohort, 79% had no out-of-school suspensions in high school; 65% had no in-school suspensions; two students were expelled.

-   In the second cohort, 52% were on track as tenth graders two years later; 48% were still in ninth grade.

-   In the second cohort, 57% had no out-of-school suspensions and 64% had no in-school suspensions.

-   Due to funding cuts, the program was terminated after two years.

“Although the data do not point to a dramatic transformation,” conclude Finnan and Kombe, “the Accelerated Program provided a necessary intervention for many students. Graduates of the program continue to look back to it as a golden time.”

“Accelerating Struggling Students’ Learning Through Identity Redevelopment” by Christine Finnan and Dennis Kombe in *Middle School Journal*, March 2011 (Vol. 42, #4, p. 4-12),

<http://www.nmsa.org/Publications/MiddleSchoolJournal/Articles/March2011/Article3/tabid/2354/Default.aspx>; the authors can be reached at[finnanc@cofc.edu](mailto:finnanc@cofc.edu) and [dennis\_kombe@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:dennis_kombe@charleston.k12.sc.us).

As usual, highlights & underlining is mine-- DAK

***FROM THE “DON’T FORGET” FILES:***

1. **Please check my wiki space at** <http://aviewfromtheknol.wikispaces.com/> **and check the discussion tab to interact with what is posted. In addition, I will (hopefully) post the “Faculty Information” and Faculty Meeting notes/presentations from previous weeks/months on the wiki.**
2. **In order to better document parent contact we can now use Infinite Campus as a tool to record Student Study Team meetings, parent meetings, emails, phone conferences and all other methods of contact that should be documented. Use this method in place of any other phone logs or documentation.**

***“Search” tabs and find the student and click on the student’s name***

***“Index” tab and click on “Student Information”***

***“PLP” tab and click on “Contact Log” then click on “New Event”***

***Fill out the form and save.***

**The entry may be brief, highlight what was talked about and with whom; dates and times will be entered as you indicate. When you enter SST information, just write what was accomplished—the strategies/accommodations to be used; something very quick.**

***Important dates from the fig tree:***

* SSA Training in the IMC starting April 13 through April 15th.
* Tech Survey for students during science class: April 18-21
* Tech Survey for teachers May 1 through 13th; must be completed by the in service date or in service time will be used to complete the survey.
* MAP testing April 25-29.

**Technology you can Use:**

**This is a new feature for the weekly memo where new, or existing, technology will be highlighted each week. Web sites, hardware and software will be the focus of this section. If you have some favorite sites or software, let me know and I will add it to this part of the weekly memo.**

